

## Message Text

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FOR WISNER FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TARNOFF

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SUBJECT: WALTER PINCUS ARTICLE ENTITLED:"U.S. SEES NO  
EARLY NUCLEAR TEST BAN ACCORD" APPEARING IN 8/9/78  
WASHINGTON POST

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS BACKED AWAY FROM ITS SUPPORT  
FOR QUICK CONCLUSION OF A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN  
AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND BRITAIN, ACCORDING TO  
ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES.

ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS AND THE BRITISH WILL  
CONTINUE IN GENEVA, SOURCES SAY THEY NOW EXPECT NO  
AGREEMENT UNTIL A U.S.-SOVIET STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION  
TALKS (SALT) TREATY HAS BEEN SIGNED AND DEALT WITH BY THE  
SENATE.

ONLY THREE MONTHS AGO, PRESIDENT CARTER WAS DETERMINED TO  
PUSH FOR RAPID AGREEMENT ON A FIVE-YEAR, ZERO-YIELD BAN ON  
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NUCLEAR TESTS. AT THE TIME, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS  
BELIEVED SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD EASILY WIN SENATE APPROVAL.

BUT THEY NOW BELIEVE IT WOULD FACT STRONG OPPOSITION THERE  
AND MIGHT ENDANGER A SALT II AGREEMENT IF BOTH WERE  
CONSIDERED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

FIERCE OPPOSITION FROM THE ENERGY AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENTS OVER THE "ZERO-YIELD" CONCEPT WHICH WOULD ALLOW EXPLOSION ONLY THE SMALLEST NUCLEAR DEVICES -- AND AN APPARENT CHANGE IN CARTER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DURATION OF THE BAN ALSO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CHANGE.

ANOTHER FACTOR IS THE DIFFICULTY BEING ENCOUNTERED IN BETTING SOVIET AGREEMENT FOR MONITORING PROCEDURES. THE UNITED STATES WANTS TO PLACE A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF SEISMIC DEVICES ON SOVIET SOIL TO GUARD AGAINST CHEATING. THE SOVIETS FIRST BALKED, THEN ACCEPTED THE "BLACK BOXES" BUT ONLY IF RUSSIANS RATHER THAN U.S. PERSONNEL COLLECTED THEIR FINDINGS. THE ISSUE REMAINS UNRESOLVED.

IN PURSUING THE TEST BAN, THE ADMINISTRATION ORIGINALLY HAD TRIED FOR A PERMANENT HALT TO ALL MILITARY NUCLEAR TESTING. EVEN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS, SUCH AS THOSE FOR CANAL BUILDING, WERE TO BE BARRED SINCE THEY COULD BE SECRETLY USED FOR WEAPONS PURPOSES.

PENTAGON OFFICIALS, CHARGED WITH MAINTAINING THE VIABILITY OF THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT, BALKED AT SUCH AN OPEN-ENDED APPROACH.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY SCIENTISTS, WHO RUN THE LABORATORIES AND INSTALLATIONS THAT DEVELOP AND BUILD NUCLEAR WEAPONS, UNCLASSIFIED

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ALSO OPPOSED THAT CONCEPT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY COULD NOT KEEP THEIR FACILITIES PREPARED TO RESUME OPERATIONS IN THE EVENT THE SOVIETS BROKE THE AGREEMENT.

AFTER LONG DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE PRESIDENT ON MAY 20 SIGNED A DECISION MEMORANDUM ESTABLISHING A U.S. PROPOSAL FOR A ZERO YIELD, FIVE-YEAR TEST BAN.

THE PRESIDENTIAL MEMO ALSO SAID, ACCORDING TO SOURCES, THAT TESTING WOULD RESUME AFTER THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD UNLESS THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AGREED TO A CONTINUATION OF THE BAN.

SOURCES DISAGREE ON WHETHER THE PRESIDENT THOUGHT AT THE TIME HE REACHED HIS DECISION THAT IT WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF DEFENSE SECRETARY HAROLD BROWN, THE JOINT CHIEFS, ENERGY SECRETARY JAMES R. SCHLESINGER AND THE INFLUENTIAL DIRECTORS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS LABORATORIES

AT LOS ALAMOS, N.M., AND LIVERMORE, CALIF.

ONE CAPITOL HILL SOURCE SAID YESTERDAY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SUMMARY OF VARIOUS AGENCY POSITIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT USED IN MAKING HIS DECISION "INACCURATELY PROTRAYED" DETAILS OF THE APPROACHES THE LABORATORIES AND THE MILITARY CHIEFS WERE WILLING TO SUPPORT.

AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSIONS DESCRIBED THE SITUATION DIFFERENTLY.

HE SAID THAT WHEN THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION CAME TO THE WHITE HOUSE SPECIAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO BE REWRITTEN AS NEGOTIATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEST BAN DELEGATION, DIFFERENCES SURFACED.

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IN ANY EVENT, THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE NEVER SENT AND WITHIN DAYS THE OPPOSITION OF BROWN, THE JOINT CHIEFS AND SCHLESINGER WERE KNOWN WITHIN THE ARMS CONTROL COMMUNITY.

ON JUNE 15, THE PRESIDENT HAD BROWN, SCHLESINGER AND THE HEADS OF THE WEAPONS LABORATORIES -- DR. HAROLD AGNEW OF LOS ALAMOS AND DR. ROGER BATZEL OF LIVERMORE -- AT THE OVAL OFFICE TO LISTEN TO THEIR OBJECTIONS TO THE ZERO YIELD, FIVE-YEAR POSITION.

THE SESSION LASTED ALMOST 90 MINUTES WITH CARTER LISTENING AND ASKING QUESTIONS AND THE LAB DIRECTORS DOING MOST OF THE TALKING, ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

IN THE VIEW OF ONE OF THE VISITORS, "MR. CARTER BEGAN REALIZING THERE IS A LOT HE HAD NOT BEEN TOLD OR DIDN'T UNDERSTAND."

ADMINISTRATION SOURCES DISPUTE THAT VIEW BUT CONCEDE THE FIVE-YEAR DURATION CARTER SIGNED IN MAY NOW APPEARS HEADING TOWARD THREE YEARS -- A TERM MORE IN LINE WITH PENTAGON AND DOE WISHES.

IN ADDITION, A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE CURRENT SITUATION SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE WHITE HOUSE NOW HAS "SOME CONCERN WHETHER YOU CAN HAVE ZERO-YIELD TESTING."

"IT'S ALL UP IN THE AIR NOW," HE ADDED.

AT A RECENT WHITE HOUSE STAFF SESSION ON COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN, CRITICS OF THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN PUT FORWARD ONE FOR THREE YEARS WHICH INCLUDED A RECOMMENDATION THAT  
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IT BE ACCOMPANIED BY A STATEMENT THAT TESTING WOULD RESUME AT THE END OF THAT PERIOD IF A SATISFACTORY PERMANENT AGREEMENT HAD NOT BEEN REACHED.

THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT BE FOR TOTAL ZERO YIELD SINCE IT WOULD PERMIT NUCLEAR TESTS OF SEVERAL HUNDRED POUNDS -- TESTS TOO LOW TO VERIFY CURRENT WEAPON RELIABILITY BUT HIGH ENOUGH TO PERMIT LABORATORY EXPERIMENTS.

PENTAGON OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE APPROACH AND WANT TO BE ABLE TO TEST UP TO FIVE KILOTONS IN ORDER TO BE ASSURED THAT OUR PRIMARY DETERRENT WEAPONS REMAIN RELIABLE.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS DON'T EXPECT CARTER TO TRY TO RESOLVE THIS MATTER IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

IF ANYONE NEEDED REMINDING OF THE OPPOSITION TO A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN, A SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING LAST WEEK PROVIDED IT. DR. DUANE SEWELL, THE PROPOSED NEW DOE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE PROGRAMS, AND DR. JAMES B. WADE JR., THE PROPOSED NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE, WHICH COORDINATES BETWEEN DOE AND THE PENTAGON ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WERE UP FOR CONFIRMATION.

BOTH MEN, WHO WILL OCCUPY KEY SPOTS IN THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS FIELD, CAME OUT FOR A THREE-YEAR BAN AND QUESTIONED THE ZERO-YIELD CONCEPT.

WADE REFLECTED CURRENT THINKING ON THE NEED FOR TESTING IN THE MILITARY QUARTERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION BY SAYING IF UNDER SALT II "THE FORCE STRUCTURE GOES DOWN, WE NEED A HIGHER CONFIDENCE IN THE FORCE STRUCTURE THAT SURVIVES."

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